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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 001107

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/09/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: LAGOS GOVERNOR TINUBU ON FUNSHO WILLIAMS' MURDER

REF: A. LAGOS 1040

[1](#)B. LAGOS 1073

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reason 1.4 (D).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) During an August 6 conversation with the Consul General, Lagos State Governor Bola Tinubu hypothesized that PDP National Vice Chairman for the Southwest Olabode (Bode) George engineered the recent murder of Funsho Williams, a leading contender for the Lagos State PDP gubernatorial nomination. Tinubu contended George disliked Williams, and engineered the crime to move aside Williams and other PDP aspirants in order to clear his own path to the 2007 gubernatorial nomination. Tinubu suspects the PDP may attempt to cast blame for the killing on Tinubu's Alliance for Democracy (AD) party. End summary.

GEORGE ELIMINATED WILLIAMS FOR PERSONAL POLITICAL GAIN?

[1](#)2. (C) Giving his impressions on the recent murder of Funsho Williams, Governor Tinubu contended the murder was undoubtedly political. Although he offered no evidence except his knowledge of the political ambitions of the key players, Tinubu firmly believed PDP National Vice Chairman (South) Olabode (Bode) George masterminded Williams' murder. Tinubu elaborated that George, a very brusque and aggressive man, had made many enemies among his fellow Yoruba. George knew many people were counting the days to seek retribution against him for the many dirty tricks he played as the PDP's point man in the Southwest. Tinubu claimed George, aware that he was unliked, recognized the need for protection once President Obasanjo left office. Consequently, George was now trying to position himself to take the PDP nomination for Lagos State Governor so that he could enjoy the power and immunity attached to that office. However, to realize this objective, several obstacles would have to be moved aside, asserted Tinubu. Williams and the other PDP hopefuls were the main obstacles.

[1](#)3. (C) Tinubu said George never liked Williams, thinking him too soft. George unsuccessfully attempted to block Williams' PDP gubernatorial nomination in 2003. Williams and the PDP lost in Lagos State in 2003 to Tinubu and the AD. After Williams' 2003 loss George refused to nominate Williams for the vacant Minister for Works position, explained Tinubu, a position which would keep Williams in the public eye and position him as a strong PDP contender for Lagos State in [1](#)2007. George instead nominated Senator Ogunlewe. For a time

Ogunlewe teamed with George to take a very confrontational approach to Tinubu's AD in Lagos State. The soft-spoken Williams was not a votary of the George-Ogunlewe hard-fisted approach to politics. However, Ogunlewe and George eventually fell out because Ogunlewe started to nurse gubernatorial ambitions. At George's behest, President Obasanjo removed Ogunlewe from his ministerial position.

¶4. (C) Tinubu posited that George engineered Williams' murder to cast suspicion on the other Lagos PDP gubernatorial aspirants. The brutality of the murder was such that it would cast a dark cloud over all the PDP hopefuls, making them unattractive candidates to stand for election. Alternatively, any number of them could be indicted for the crime. Under present law, a pending indictment renders a person ineligible to stand for election. Whatever avenue was taken, George's goal was to make the current batch of candidates untenable, forcing the PDP state leadership to cast about quickly for a candidate of status. In George's mind, only George would fit that bill at such short notice, Tinubu contended. To a lesser degree, Tinubu expressed concern George might attempt to pin the crime on the AD. With George intimately involved as a candidate or as an accuser of the AD for Williams' murder, the 2007 election in Lagos promised to be a hot, untidy affair characterized more by fisticuffs than finesse, Tinubu augured.

COMMENT

¶5. (C) Tinubu had beaten Williams in two successive gubernatorial races and presumably would have been comfortable seeing his AD run against Williams a third time. However, Tinubu sees Bode George in a different light. This

LAGOS 00001107 002 OF 002

is not the first allegation we heard of George's involvement in lethal politics. While no hard evidence exists of which we are aware, George's name is mentioned throughout the political parlors in the Southwest connected with the death of former Attorney General Bola Ige in 2002 and many other attacks against opposition politicians. While Tinubu's theory of Williams' murder appears tenuous, it illustrates the high level of suspicion that grips Lagos. Tinubu's attempt at detective work might be less than stellar, but his most important prognosis seems authoritative. The 2007 election in Lagos will be a sloppy and likely a violent affair. End comment.
BROWNE